

**Performance
Improvement Scrutiny
Committee**



Date	24 th January 2008
Venue	Town Hall, St Annes
Committee members	Christine Akeroyd (Acting Chairman) Linda Nulty, Kathleen Harper, Ken Hopwood, Craig Halewood, Cheryl Little
Other Councillors	Tony Ford, Dawn Prestwich, Fabian Craig-Wilson
Officers	Allan Oldfield, Alex Scrivens, Paul Walker, Simon Kularatne Carolyn Whewell
Others	Susan Fazackerley, Paul Rigby

Prior to the start of the meeting, Councillor Linda Nulty was nominated to act as Vice-Chair for the duration of this meeting.

1. Declarations of interest

Members were reminded that any personal/prejudicial interests should be declared as required by the Council's Code of Conduct adopted in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000.

2. Confirmation of minutes

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the Performance Improvement Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 22nd November 2007 as a correct record for signature by the chairman.

3. Substitute members

The following substitutions were reported under council procedure rule 22.3:

Councillor Dawn Prestwich for Councillor Keith Hyde
Councillor Fabian Craig-Wilson for Councillor John Singleton
Councillor Tony Ford for Councillor David Chedd

4. The Data Quality Policy

Allan Oldfield (Executive Manager, Corporate Policy and Performance) presented a report detailing the Fylde Borough Council Data Quality Policy. The Data Quality Policy has been in place since August 2006 and is subject to inspection by the Audit Commission. The Audit Commission recommended that the Data Quality Policy is subject for review every 18months and as such the next review date is 2009.

The Data Quality Policy was designed to ensure that the Council has a clear approach to ensuring that any information or data produced, used and published was reliable, accurate and authorised. The policy outlined the approach that the council has taken in the management of all information and data that is used in service delivery.

Mr Oldfield reported that the Policy had a significant impact on all the performance information that is produced by the council and that Performance Improvement Scrutiny Committee members should be conscious of the objectives and standards of the policy. The policy outlines the importance of ensuring that the data used meets the following criteria:

- It is accurate and consistent (reliable)
- It is available to those who need it (availability)
- It is available when it is needed (timeliness)
- It has a valid structure and format (useable)
- It truly reflects the event or activity that it relates to (integrity)
- It is monitored, reviewed and checked prior to publication / use (validity)
- It is protected from unauthorised access (secure)
- It contains all relevant data without duplication (completeness)
- It is needed (useful)

An action plan was included with the policy and this was due to be reviewed in 2009 along with the policy. The action plan was taken from the recommendations made by the Audit Commission in November 2007 and covered all the key areas required to improve data quality at Fylde.

Members questioned how the new set of national indicators will affect the quality of the data presented to the committee. Mr Oldfield advised that many of the indicators, although worded differently were similar to the data that was required currently.

Following the debate, it was RESOLVED:

1. That the committee agree the revised Data Quality Policy and the 2008 - 2009 Action Plan for Data Quality that is included as Appendix B in the policy.
2. That the committee apply the principles and objectives of the Data Quality policy in all their future scrutiny of performance information and data.

5. Escendency -Performance Management Software System

Alex Scrivens (Performance and Efficiency Officer) provided a practical demonstration of the new performance management system Escendency.

Escendency is an online Performance Management System currently being used by several local authorities to collate and link performance information and data to responsible officers throughout the organisation. Escendency allows individuals to monitor performance and targets in real time and understand the contribution the service makes to the wider strategic objectives. The system presents performance data in an

easy to read format colour coding targets according to whether they are under achieving, on target or over achieving. Officers in individual service areas are responsible for entering the performance data on time. Members were advised that they could access and log on to the Escendency System via the Council's intranet site.

Mr Scrivens advised that officers had developed the Escendency system over the last six months working closely with the developers to ensure that Fylde's strategic map is correctly in the system. The system is currently used for to collect and manage all the performance data for both local and national indicators. Several service areas have been using the system to develop and monitor strategic action plans that cut across all service areas e.g. Audit and Risk Management. Mr Scrivens advised that approximately 20% of office based staff are using the system and it is intended to roll this out further.

During 2008, the Escendency system will be developed to collate and manage the new national performance indicators, incorporate all the business unit actions plans and for reporting performance online to members and other stakeholders.

Members sought clarity on how much officer time is saved through using the Escendency system. Mr Scrivens advised that this was very difficult to measure and was different for each department although it had been estimated that for Internal Audit alone, the approximate time saving was 5-10 hours a month.

Members questioned the cost of the system and training provided to officer to support the use of Escendency. Mr Scrivens further advised that the annual cost of the system was £5000 which allowed for 500 user licenses. Training has been provided in house by Mr Scrivens with the only costs being officer time; The Performance Management System in other councils such as Blackpool can cost in excess of £40,000 per annum.

It was requested that, in addition to two committee members working with Mr Scrivens, a workshop be arranged for later in the year to explain the Escendency system in more detail for Members

Following the debate, it was RESOLVED

1. That the committee appoints Councillor Cheryl Little and Councillor Craig Halewood to work with the Performance and Efficiency Officer to establish how the system can be most effectively used to present and report data to the committee and other stakeholders.
2. To organise a workshop for Members on the Escendency Performance Management System for later in the year.

6. Third Quarter Performance report

Allan Oldfield (Executive Manager, Corporate Policy and Performance) presented a report detailing the performance of the key best value performance indicators (BVPI's). The report highlighted those indicators where performance was significantly above or below the target for the third quarter of the financial year (performance until December 31st 2007).

Mr Oldfield reported that overall performance at the end of the third quarter was very good with the majority of the indicators on or above target for the current year with few exceptions.

The sickness and absence figure BVPI 12 had experienced a poor three months between October and December 2007 and was now on target to be bottom quartile performance at the end of the financial year current trend continued. Mr Oldfield advised that the files of long term sick employees had now been passed on to the Blackpool HR service for review. Members questioned whether the sickness figures increased during certain seasons. Mr Oldfield advised that as Fylde Borough Council employed a disproportionate number of manual workers, it was likely that due to the nature of the work, sickness figures would rise during the winter months.

The planning performance BVPI 109b and 109c had demonstrated significant improvement on the same period 2006/07 figures for the same period highlighting the impact of the changes made. However, performance was still below target and the planning service performance had recently been subject to an independent review by the Planning Advisory Service. Members of the committee agreed to arrange a special meeting to review the recommendations of the review.

Members questioned what measures could be taken to communicate the low levels of crime (BVPIs 126, 127a and 127b) to residents of Fylde through the use of the press service. Fylde was an area with low levels of recorded crime yet Members felt that fear of crime was high amongst residents. Mr Oldfield advised that he would refer this to Mr Paul Norris.

Following the discussion, it was RSOLVED:

1. That the committee agree to receive a report on the Equality Standard for Local Government at their next meeting as part of the internal declaration process.
2. That the committee agree to setting up a special meeting of the committee on the 27th February 2008 to examine the Planning Advisory Report recommendations and the performance of BVPI 205 in respect of planning best practice.

7. Annual Asset Management Report and Capital Asset Update

Mr Paul Walker (Executive Manager, Strategic Planning and Development) and Mr Simon Kularatne (Corporate Property Officer) presented a report detailing the Annual Asset Management Report and Capital Asset Update.

Mr Walker reported that the Annual Asset Management was a five-year rolling plan showing how the council used its property and other assets to deliver services it has agreed to provide. The Plan provided members with a retrospective review of the previous year and a summary of plans for the future.

Mr Walker further reported that the Council had entered into a partnership with Wyre Borough Council to provide building maintenance service for Fylde. Fylde currently buys in the equivalent of approximately 1.5 technical officers to provide for all Council Assets the following:

- Day to day repairs and maintenance
- Annual servicing and repairs and maintenance
- Planned repairs and maintenance
- Asbestos management and control
- Legionella management and control
- Additional specialist advice and assistance as requested.

Members questioned whether this arrangement provided the best value for money for Fylde. Mr Walker advised that the cost included administration support, specialist advice and the procurement power of buying services jointly with Wyre and Lancashire. Mr Walker further advised that this arrangement expires at the end of September 2008 and an evaluation of the benefits of work to date and future options will be carried out to assess whether the service provides the best value for money for Fylde.

Mr Kularatne advised that Fylde had also entered into a framework agreement along with Wyre BC with the Office of Government Commerce (OGC) buying solutions for the supply of energy. Although the trend is for higher energy prices this new approach means we are taking advantage of the joined buying power of the Government which is below the general market rate. This has resulted in a saving of approximately 5.8% in comparison with the cost of buying the same amount of energy as a stand alone council.

Mr Walker reported that the plan detailed the future plans including the allocation of a 200k grant from the Tourist Board to invest in improvements to St Annes, the retender of the Farmers Market and the Blackpool Wyre and Fylde Multi Area Agreement. Members sought clarity on the reasons for retendering the Farmers Market. Mr Walker advised that Fylde Farmers had pulled out of running the market. Since then, a single operator had been running the market and charged stallholders for the use.

The Plan detailed the current position in relation to the local property indicators where Fylde was significantly behind the benchmark targets for repair and maintenance costs per square metre, % accommodation vacant or unused, annual running costs per square metre, space utilisation, annual running costs per employee and staff satisfaction in relation to accommodation.

Members questioned how long these higher costs per employee were likely to continue. Mr Walker advised that the cost would continue until the new Council offices were built. Projected timescales were largely dependant on how long it takes to seek tenders to build the site and ensure the Council best value for money. Mr Walker further advised in response to a query that the new accommodation project planned 163 work stations for 209 staff although this was still in a state of flux.

Following the discussion, it was RESOLVED

1. For the Performance Improvement Scrutiny Committee to continue to monitor the local property indicators as part of the regular performance reports.
2. For officers to report back on the buildings and maintenance contract partnership with Wyre after the evaluation process in September 2008.

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